Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program

2004 ANNUAL REPORT

February 2, 2005

The Honourable Myron Kowalsky
Speaker
Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly
105 Legislative Building
Regina, SK S4S 0B3

Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is my honour to transmit to you for Tabling in the Legislative Assembly, the Third Annual Report of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program (2004). The Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program is a joint effort by the Legislative Assembly, the University of Regina, and the University of Saskatchewan. I want to thank you and all Members of the Legislative Assembly for your support of this very important program. I also want to thank the Members who worked with the Interns and assisted in this learning experience.

All best wishes.

Sincerely,

Gordon Barnhart, Ph.D.
Academic Director
Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program

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2004 Annual Report

Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program

This was the third year of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program (SLIP). The Board of Internal Economy in 2001, approved the proposal to initiate this program and set aside the funds to do so. This was in partnership with the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. I want to thank these partners for their financial and moral support for this important program. In a time when politics and parliamentary process seem to be less important to the general population, it is vital to have an internship program where young people of our province can work with elected representatives and government officials. It is hoped that the people of Saskatchewan will understand their political and parliamentary processes better by having SLIP. The Legislative Assembly covered the direct costs of the program. We had four sponsors who donated money to cover the costs to have the Interns travel to Toronto, Ottawa, Washington and Winnipeg to meet with other Interns, Members, the media and public servants and to see other legislatures in action and to participate in a Political Science conference. I want to thank the Co-operators, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan for their generous donations. It is because of these donations that our Interns were able to broaden their studies and to travel to these three capital cities and to compare federal and provincial politics.

Our four interns were: Fabian Contreras (BA, University of Regina, 2004), Kim McKechney (BA, University of Saskatchewan, 2004), Joanne Harpauer-Dignean (BA, University of Saskatchewan, 1997 and B.Comm 2004) and Ryan Griffiths (BA, University of Regina, 2004). These four individuals were chosen by a selection committee made up of Jocelyn Praud (University of Regina), John E. Brockelbank (Former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly), Herb Swan (Former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly) and Gwenn Ronyk (Clerk of the

Legislative Assembly). I would normally have been on the selection committee but unfortunately I was unable to attend due to a family crisis. Corinne Barnett was also on the selection panel representing the Interns. The committee was determined to select the four best people without concern for gender or university where the applicants studied. The results at the end of the year showed that the selection committee made wise choices. A special thanks goes out to the members of this committee who worked very hard to make these selections for 2004. As a point of interest, of the four interns for 2004, two are from University of Regina and two from University of Saskatchewan, with one woman and three men.

The Interns' program started with a two week orientation in Regina in January 2004. The Interns met with government officials and legislative officers to study the process that they were entering. They met with caucus staff from both the government and the opposition and prepared a research plan for their research papers which were due by the end of the program.

During the first two weeks, the Interns met as a group with government members and with opposition members to determine areas of interest and research needs and plans. The Interns then selected which members they wanted to work for in conjunction with the requests and special needs of the members. The Interns served for three months with members from one side and then shifted over to the other side. The match ups were as follows:

	FIRST TERM	**SECOND TERM**
Fabian Contreras	June Draude and Brenda Bakken (Opposition)	Doreen Hamilton (Government)
Ryan Griffiths	Glenn Hagel (Government)	Rod Gantefoer (Opposition)
Joanne Harpauer-Dignean	Graham Addley (Government)	Ken Krawetz (Opposition)
Kim McKechney	Ben Heppner (Opposition)	Lon Borgerson (Government)

I want to thank the members who agreed to work with the Interns and for their teaching abilities. The Interns wrote letters, prepared questions for Oral Question period, wrote Members' statements, prepared constituency correspondence and completed various research projects for the members. The Interns went with the member to his/her constituency to see first hand, the

way a member represents the people in the constituency. Without the members' enthusiastic support and willingness to spend time with the Interns, the program would not have enjoyed the success it did.

This year the Interns were given a special assignment that led to their work being published in an international parliamentary journal. Each Intern collaborated with one or in some cases two members to write an article on an aspect of Saskatchewan parliamentary practice or public policy issues. The articles were published in a 128 page supplement to *The Parliamentarian* in August, 2004 to mark the 50th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference hosted by Canada in 2004. The diligent and competent research and writing done by the Interns enabled the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly to be well represented in this Commonwealth-wide publication.

The Interns planned one out of province research trip. They traveled to Ottawa, Toronto and Washington where they met with other Interns, Members of Parliament, Ontario MPs and members of the American capital. The Interns also traveled to Winnipeg to attend a Political Science conference. The Interns reported that their out of province experiences were an important part of their overall very positive experience with SLIP. The Interns were thus able to compare the various different systems of government and to broaden their understanding of the Canadian Parliamentary system. A special thanks goes out to all the members, officials and interns in Ottawa, Toronto, and Washington who worked so willingly with the Saskatchewan Interns. Over the seven months of the program, the Interns updated the web site for SLIP, and enhanced the visual identity for the program. Throughout the program the Interns met with key leaders in the community to learn from their leadership style and to discuss public policy issues.

With any program, certain measurables must be identified to help organizers know if the program met with success. The first measurable was the evaluations done by the members who had Interns. There was an initial concern about confidentiality and whether the Interns would be able to work for one side of the House and then transfer to the other without letting party secrets slip. The Interns proved that they were reliable and trustworthy. Interns were allowed to sit in on one of the caucuses. The members know that Interns can be very valuable to them. The Interns proved to be quick studies with a good background in the academic study of politics.

They were then able to transfer this "book knowledge" into practical worth for the members. For the members who worked with Interns, their evaluations were very positive and they have already indicated they would like to have an Intern again next year.

Part of the program required the Interns to make public presentations on SLIP to encourage students to apply for future years. This part of the program was to give the Interns experience with public speaking.

Another measure of growth and learning was that the Interns wrote a brief exam on their first and last days in the program. It was the same exam each time and the exercise was conducted to measure the amount of growth for each Intern. The exam tested their knowledge and understanding of the parliamentary process. The Interns were tested on their approval or not of the Legislative Assembly and politicians in general. We now have a concrete measure of how their attitudes changed and improved over their seven months with the Legislature based on a better understanding of the process.

The Interns also completed evaluations of the program and offered some very helpful suggestions for improvement for next year. Notwithstanding the suggestions, the Interns expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the program and were very appreciative of the people who supported SLIP. For Interns in the program who are still students at either university, the granting of credits from the two universities has been approved and is working well.

The final requirement for each Intern was to write a twenty-five page paper of publishable quality on a parliamentary or public policy topic. Once we have enough papers over the next few years, we will publish a collection of these papers. This will add to the body of knowledge on governance and public policy. Two of the Interns this year were completing their degrees and used this option to have their Internship as a class recognized by their Universities. Based on their work experience and the academic paper, they received six credits toward their degree.

I can report that the first three years of the program have been a huge success thanks to the support of our sponsors, the Speaker of the Legislature and all members of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. The last and most special thanks has to go to the four Interns themselves – Fabian, Kim, Joanne and Ryan for their keen enthusiasm, hard work, dedication to the Program and their love of learning about our legislative system. Each Intern has said that their experience as an Intern has altered their perception of governance and politics. Thanks to the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program, we have four young people who are very knowledgeable about our political system and how the people are governed.

The program has been progressing well over the first three years but it was in the spring of 2004 that the Board of Internal Economy announced that the Legislative Assembly would not be funding the 2005 program due to funding shortfalls. Fortunately, donors to the University of Saskatchewan stepped in to provide funding on a one time basis to keep the program going for 2005. The negative aspect of this is that for 2005, the program is open only to students of the University of Saskatchewan. Students at the University of Regina were ineligible to participate. It is hoped that the Board of Internal Economy will find the appropriate funding to fully fund the program in 2006. If this funding cannot be found, it may mean that this very successful legislative program will have to fold. The good news is that the program is alive and well in 2005. The new Interns for 2005 are already in place and are working for members. The process of serving the members and learning about our system of government will continue at least for one more year. I should further add that I have stepped down as Academic Director and Professor Ken Pontikes from the University of Saskatchewan is the new Director.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program.

Sincerely,

Gordon Barnhart, Ph.D.
Academic Director

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